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GENERAL NEWS.

The spirit ration in the U. S. Navy is to cease from and after September 1. The N. Y. Express says the Jack tars do not relish "stop ping their grog."

An act was passed at the recent session of Congress authorizing the President to enter into arrangements with one or more foreign governments having possession of the West Indies or other tropical regions, to receive from the United States all negroes delivered from on board vessels seized in the prosecution of the slave trade by commanders of U. S. ves sels, and to provide them with suitable instruc tion, clothing and shelter, and to employ them, at wages, under such regulations as shall be agreed upon, for a period not exceeding five years from the date of their being landed at the place or places agreed upon. In pursuance of this act, a contract has just been entered into by the Minister of Denmark and the Sec retary of the Interior on the part of the Uni ted States.

Boatmen on the New York canals are now re ceiving twenty dollars per month. The serv ices of good men are in brisk demand, as almost every boat in sailing condition is in requisition to bring down the immense supply of grain from the West.

The steamship Fulton arrived at New York on Wednesday night, from N. O. on the 16th inst. Her advices are four days later than previously received, but are not of special in terest. General Shepley, Military Governor of Louisiana, came as passenger, with dis patches for the government. The Fulton passed a portion of Commodore Porter's mor tar fleet at anchor off Pilot Town, which place they were to leave the following day, 17th inst., for Hampton Roads.

The semi-official article in the Constitution nel, repudiating political objects in Mexico, and declaring that France now seeks only redress for injury to private interests, is received with applause by the rest of the Paris journals, but it is represented that the honor of the French flag will probably render it necessary to occupy the capital.

The N. Y. Herald says:—"In the absence of other duties General Hunter's arrangements for the summer campaign are likely to create a greater state of alarm among some of the offi cers of his own command than in the ranks of the enemy. He has set the machinery of his department at work to bring to light the enor mous frauds to which the Government has been subjected, and to deal out to their authors the punishment which is their due. Thus far the labors of his detective corps have been remark ably successful."

The strike of the laborers on the Lehigh Ca nal has ceased.

A letter from the camp at Waterloo, Fau quier county, Va., says:—"Butlers are now pre cluded from receiving supplies by railroad on account, it is said, of salt and other contraband goods having passed in large quantities throu gh the lines. The mill in which a large supply of cloth for Confederate uniforms was found some time ago, near Warrenton, was destroyed by fire this week. The troops rejoice in the great improvement in their culinary arrange ment consequent on the new order to forage on the enemy. They now enjoy all the deli cacies of the season. Some of them have large quantities of Confederate scrip, cheaply ob tained, for which they purchase any live stock the country affords."

It is stated in certain quarters that there is no design on the part of the Federal Govern ment to capture either Vicksburg or Mobile, as the necessity for keeping a large army at both places prevents the Confederates from operating in greater strength in Kentucky and elsewhere. At both places there cannot be fewer than sixty thousand men, according to the judgment of those who profess knowledge.

Another army has been sent to Utah. The pioneer regiment, the Second Cavalry, was or dered to break camp at San Francisco about three weeks since, and repair at once to the city of the Saints, or its neighborhood.

A letter from Jerusalem states that a young American gentleman, named Carter, a divinity student, was lately drowned in the Jordan. A friend who had accompanied him from the United States was a witness of the disaster, but could not afford assistance. The young man, when bathing, was carried away by the rapid current, and, after sinking two or three times, disappeared.

It is expected that the new rules for the ex change of prisoners will be announced next week. The point in dispute was as to the disposal or position of persons in the States, who may be in sympathy with the United States or Confederates, and this was to be finally set tled yesterday, Gen. Dix having left Washing ton for that purpose, it is said. The Union released prisoners, it is supposed will be sent to the Mississippi and to James river, as the two points of exchange agreed upon. What will be done with political prisoners is not yet known, but it is probable that they will be exchanged. Surgeons and chaplains will be exchanged upon terms of perfect equality, and not regarded as prisoners. Butlers and their clerks, too, will be held like surgeons and chaplains, as non-combatants, and released.

Col. Edmund C. Charles, of the Tammany Regiment, is now at the New York hospital, having recently returned from Richmond on parole. He gives a detailed account of the new Merrimac which the Confederates are building after the pattern of the old one.—The colonel saw also another iron-clad vessel, which appeared ready for service. It was a gunboat of about four hundred tons.

The New York Express thus speaks of the dry goods trade in that city: "The animation and activity still continue in the trade, and pri ces of nearly all descriptions of goods are high er. The market is irregular and unsettled."

There are now nearly fifty recruiting offices open in New York, and the business has be come active. Authorizations are being return ed, some showing their full quota of men and all making favorable reports.

The James river is now filled with obstruc tions, for some distance. A large number of vessels, canal boats &c., filled with stone, have been sunk in the stream. Great quantities of stone have been thrown overboard and sunk.—Since the obstructions were placed there, a fresh et, the highest for forty years, has washed down an immense quantity of sand, and the whole mass is now embedded together.

Since the public have taken to the use of the paper postage stamps for small change, the danger of defrauding the Post Office Depart ment by the frequent use of the same paper postage stamp, from which the marks of can cellation could easily be obliterated, has induced postmasters to use indelible ink, which cannot be erased, and which not only prevents the second use of any one postage stamp, but by using a proper printing stamp makes the post-mark on the letter distinct and easily read.

Advices from the Indian territory state 1,500 Cherokee Indians under John Ross, will act for the U. S., and that arms are to be furnish ed to other Indians to act against the Secession ists in the various tribes.

The Wheeling Press says:—"Col. Wm. Alexander, Aid to Gov. Pierpoint, has returned from Alexandria with money for the First Vir ginia Regiment."

A letter written one week ago, by an officer of high position in Gen. Buell's army at Hunts ville, Alabama, says that they have several companies composed of Alabama Union men already organized, and they will soon have enough to make a regiment. Gen. Buell's course it is said has greatly strengthened the Union sentiment in North Alabama.

Mr. Revedy Johnson's commissions, on the part of the United States, embrace two classes of controversy. The first commission, dated the 10th of June last, applies to those which arose from the proceedings of Major General Butler in reference to Foreign Consuls, and particularly to the one with the Consul of the Netherlands. The second applies to sugars seized by order of the Major General, and claimed by certain British, French, and Gre cian merchants.

There are three banks in Winchester; the Bank of Winchester is the only one doing bu siness; the Valley Bank has been removed to Farmville, and the branch of the Farmers' Bank is closed. The bills of Virginia banks in circulation are 25@30 per cent. below Treasury notes and Baltimore city bank bills.

The steamer North Star has arrived from Aspinwall, bringing \$273,000 in treasure.